A

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DELIVERED AT THE

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REV. *REED PAIGE*, M. A.

TO THE

PASTORAL CARE

OF THE

CHURCH in HANCOCK,

STATE OF NEWHAMPSHIRE.

SEPTEMBER 21st, MDCCXCI.

BY THOMAS HOLT, M. A.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN *HARDWICK*.

"IT WAS NEEDFUL FOR ME TO WRITE UNTO YOU, AND EXHORT YOU THAT YE SHOULD EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH WHICH WAS ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS." *ST. JUDE.*

"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY: IF THEY SPEAK NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORD, IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM." *JEHOVAH.*

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MDCCXCII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

AN

ORDINATION SERMON.

2 TIMOTHY i. 13.

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS, WHICH THOU HAST HEARD OF ME, IN FAITH AND LOVE WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

THE affections of Saint Paul were ſo agreeably captivated with the character of JESUS, that he gloried in the croſs, or the perſon, offices, and inconceivable glories of the MESSIAH. Animated with love to the dear REDEEMER, he willingly commenced a powerful advocate for that cauſe, which once was the object of his bitter oppoſition. His mind was elevated ſo far above the aſperſions of a deſpiſing and ſinful world, that he readily choſe, and zealouſly purſued, a courſe, which excited the reſentment and implacable enmity of the generality of the Jewiſh nation. Of theſe the apoſtle was not inſenſible, when, by the energy of divine grace, he firſt renounced his Jewiſh commiſſion, and became a cordial and potent friend to the cauſe of chriſtianity. He was diſpoſed to forſake all earthly connexions inconſiſtent with his character, as a chriſtian and apoſtle, and to take up and cheerfully bear his croſs through the tempeſtuous ocean of ſuffering and tribulation, which appeared ready to effect his temporal ruin. Supported and comforted by divine power and aſſiſtance derived to him through the mediation of the great IMMANUEL, the weapons of his warfare were mighty through GOD;

and the combined forces of earth and hell were unable to prevent his proclaiming the terms of ſalvation to periſhing ſinners. Though the HOLY GHOST witneſſed that bonds and afflictions awaited him; yet, as a humble follower of the KING of ZION, he purſued, with holy fortitude, the work aſſigned to him by his LORD, not counting his life dear to himſelf. He was not inſenſible of his obligations to his great LORD and MASTER, and he realized, in ſome happy meaſure, the importance and excellency of the goſpel ſcheme of ſalvation. Inſpired immediately by the HOLY GHOST, and having experienced the ſufficiency of the grace of GOD, the great apoſtle of the Gentiles was eminently well qualified to give directions to Timothy, his own ſon in the faith, to fortify his mind againſt the impending ſtorms of human vengeance, which awaited the faithful preachers of the goſpel. That Timothy might be animated to a faithful diſcharge of the important truſt committed to him, the apoſtle exhibits a number of motives, drawn from the efficiency of divine grace, the unchangeable purpoſe of GOD, and the all prevalent mediation of JESUS CHRIST. "For GOD hath not given us," the preachers of the goſpel, "the ſpirit of fear," a ſervile dread of our enemies, whether men or fiends; "but of power," a diſpoſition to encounter with cheerfulneſs every difficulty and danger, "and of love, and of a ſound mind. Be not thou therefore aſhamed of the teſtimony of our LORD, nor of me his priſoner: But be thou partaker of the afflictions of the goſpel," or the ſufferings which you may reaſonably expect to endure for your faithful adherence to the goſpel, "according to the power of GOD; who hath ſaved us," or granted us the quickening energy of his SPIRIT, to deliver us from the dominion of ſin, and curſe of his holy law, "and hath called us with an holy calling, not according to our works," not being influenced by reſpect to faith nor any other work foreſeen in us, "but according to his own purpoſe and grace which was given us in CHRIST JESUS, before the world be-

gan," or which GOD the FATHER, in eternity, deſigned, through CHRIST, to grant us in the preſent ſtate; "but is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, who hath aboliſhed death," deſtroyed its ſting in believers, "and hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apoſtle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cauſe I alſo ſuffer theſe things;" from my fidelity in publiſhing the glad tidings of peace, pardon, and ſalvation, men, inſtigated by oppoſition to the cauſe of religion, will take occaſion to involve me in all theſe evils of impriſonment; "nevertheleſs, I am not aſhamed: For I know whom I have believed;" from long and happy experience I am ſure of the faithfulneſs, benevolence, and allſufficiency of that SAVIOUR on whom I rely entirely for divine acceptance; "and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day," when the ſtates of all mankind will be fixed, for eternity, by the irrevocable ſentence of the SUPREME JUDGE. Then, as an effuſion of his pure benevolence to the young Evangeliſt, and ardent deſire to promote the proſperity of CHRIST'S church in the world, the apoſtle gave this exhortation; "Hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS."

With great propriety, the importance and ſolemnity of the preſent occaſion will lead the mind to contemplate a number of ideas ſuggeſted in the text.

I. An illuſtration of the form of ſound words will be attempted.

By the form of ſound words, we are, without doubt, to underſtand, the ſyſtem of doctrines exhibited in divine revelation.

That the Scriptures of the Old and New Teſtaments do indeed contain a Revelation from the GOD of heaven, muſt here be taken as a conceded point. At proper times, however, the miniſters of JESUS CHRIST are under indiſpenſable obligations to rep-

reſent, in a clear and faithful manner, the arguments to ſupport and evince the truth of this important article.

The candid mind will not expect, in the preſent diſcourſe, an illuſtration of all the ſentiments inculcated in the ſacred volume; but thoſe only, which are conſidered of principal importance.

Let it be obſerved, that the true character of the ſupreme JEHOVAH is to be repreſented. Miſtakes, reſpecting this, may finally involve men in deſtruction. Inſtigated by a depraved heart, the mind may feel pleaſed with miſconceptions of the divine character: The natural conſequences muſt be, the embracing of all erroneous and deluſive opinions, and the practice, perhaps, of every ſpecies of wickedneſs. Right conceptions of the divine character, it muſt be admitted, are eſſentially important. Without theſe, we ſhould be liable to worſhip and ſerve the creature more than the CREATOR. Every attribute, conceivable or poſſible, unites in conſtituting the character of GOD. He is a SPIRIT, poſſeſſed of *Infinity*, *Eternity*, *Immutability*, *Omniſcience*, and *Omnipotence*. Theſe are commonly ſtyled his natural perfections. He is likewiſe poſſeſſed of infinite *Holineſs*, *Juſtice*, *Goodneſs*, and *Truth*. Theſe are termed his moral perfections. In Revelation we find a repreſentation of the moral character of GOD in theſe words: "GOD is love."[a] This muſt, doubtleſs, teach us that all the moral perfections of the DIVINE NATURE may be compriſed in love. This love, or benevolence, we are not impiouſly to ſuppoſe, operates by partial biaſſes. It muſt be a general affection, ſeeking the general felicity of intelligent exiſtence, and the good of individuals, ſo far as their happineſs is involved in the good of the intelligent univerſe. The ſame diſpoſition, which ſeeks the general good, muſt, for the ſame reaſon, be oppoſed to that which oppoſes itſelf to the production of general felicity. Should any creatures be oppoſed to the general happineſs of the intelligent univerſe, then the

[a] 1 John iv. 8.

ſame divine benevolence, which ſeeks and promotes the general good, muſt equally oppoſe the felicity of ſuch creatures: Conſequently, GOD's perfections muſt be as fully engaged to effect the final deſtruction of his enemies, as the felicity of his friends.

The doctrine of the *Trinity* in *Unity* is, evidently, compriſed in the form of ſound words. A *Trinity* of perſons, we are to believe, is the revealed mode of the divine *Exiſtence*. This, however, will not imply a *Trinity* of GODS. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the FATHER, the WORD, and the HOLY GHOST: And theſe *Three* are *One*."[b]

The *Divinity* of our LORD JESUS CHRIST is inſeparably connected with the doctrine of the *Trinity*, and moſt clearly eſtabliſhed by divine Revelation. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given—and his name ſhall be called—The MIGHTY GOD, The EVERLASTING FATHER.[c] In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with GOD, and the WORD was GOD."[d] There is not the moſt diſtant intimation that the being, here mentioned, was a mere man, or a mere creature. This ſame WORD, we are informed, was made fleſh:[e] In the beginning, before the exiſtence of any world, or created intelligence, this ſame WORD was with GOD; HE was GOD. And, if the ſacred text can exhibit a proper repreſentation, this WORD, in eternity, muſt be in the complete poſſeſſion of all the divine attributes. If we examine the chapter with the greateſt ſcrutiny, we find nothing which can induce us to draw the concluſion, that, in the laſt clauſe of the text, the appellation, GOD, means any being inferiour to the ſupreme GOD; either by delegation, nature, or title. But as the term GOD, when firſt uſed in the verſe, muſt denote the *Divine Eſſence*; ſo, when uſed in the laſt clauſe, we muſt underſtand, by it, the ONE ONLY LIVING GOD. The ſame apoſtle ſays, ſpeaking of JESUS CHRIST, "This is the true GOD."[f] The apoſtle Paul likewiſe ſays, "CHRIST—who is

[b] 1 John v. 7. [c] Iſa. ix. 6. [d] John i. 1. [e] Ver. 14. [f] 1 John v. 20.

over all, GOD bleſſed for ever."[g] Again, "GOD was manifeſt in the fleſh."[h] But, without doubt, our LORD JESUS CHRIST underſtood his own nature, as well as fallible men can at the preſent day; even any of thoſe, who profeſs to believe that he is nothing more than a mere creature, or a mere man. Let us hear what that illuſtrious perſon has ſaid, reſpecting his *Divinity*; and we may readily find evidence ſufficient, one might ſuppoſe, to convince the mind devoid of prepoſſeſſion, that he inſiſted upon this, as a cardinal point in the chriſtian ſcheme. He hath aſſured us, "No man hath aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the SON of MAN which is in heaven.[i] Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, before Abraham was, I AM."[k] He hath taught us, "that all men ſhould honour the SON, even as they honour the FATHER."[l] He hath likewiſe ſaid, "Thou ſhalt worſhip the LORD thy GOD, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve."[m] As men are required to pay the SON the ſame homage and honour which they are commanded to pay the FATHER; then, he muſt either be "the *true* GOD," or they muſt be required to tranſgreſs that law, which poſitively forbids the offering of homage or religious worſhip to any being beſides the ſupreme GOD. JESUS further ſaid, "I and my FATHER are one."[n] And he called GOD his FATHER in ſuch a peculiar ſenſe, as, according to the underſtanding of the Jews, implied that he poſſeſſed a full equality with GOD. They alleged againſt him the capital crime of blaſphemy. He never intimated that their allegation againſt him was groundleſs, on the ſuppoſition he was not the true GOD. Had not *Divinity* been an eſſential property of his character, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the integrity even of a holy prophet might have induced him to make an ingenuous and explicit declaration, that his words indicated no ſuch idea as the Jews ſuppoſed, and that he made no pretenſions to an equality with the FATHER.

[g] Rom. ix. 5. [h] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [i] John iii. 13. [k] Chap. viii. 58. [l] Chap. v. 23. [m] Matth. iv. 10. [n] John x. 30.

He never retracted his words, nor denied the ſentiment that he was the SON of GOD; neither did he intimate that he was not the SON of GOD in that peculiar ſenſe, which the Jews ſuppoſed his declarations clearly implied. When the Jews apprehended and brought him before Pontius Pilate, they impeached his character with this charge; "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the SON of GOD."[o] They were under obligations to obey this law; "He that blaſphemeth the name of the LORD, he ſhall ſurely be put to death."[p] When the high prieſt aſked him, "Art thou the CHRIST, the SON of the BLESSED? JESUS ſaid, I am."[q] The Jews condemned him, as one guilty of blaſphemy, and finally effected his crucifixion. Now, on the ſuppoſition JESUS CHRIST was nothing more than a mere man, or a mere creature, though the firſt and greateſt, and not the true GOD, were not the Jews obedient to GOD's expreſs commandment, which required the death of any blaſphemer? And was not their conduct in the crucifixion of CHRIST as praiſeworthy, as that of the ancient Jews when they ſtoned to death the Iſraelitiſh woman's ſon, who blaſphemed the name of the LORD? But as we have clear aſſurance that GOD condemned the Jews for their unparalleled wickedneſs diſplayed in the crucifixion of the great REDEEMER, we may have equal evidence that his *Divinity* is inculcated in Revelation.

The ſacred Scriptures appear clearly to teach us the *Divinity* of the HOLY GHOST. St. Peter interrogated Ananias; "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the HOLY GHOST?" And then ſaid; "Thou haſt not lied unto men, but unto GOD."[r] He is in the poſſeſſion of the divine attributes of Omniſcience and Omnipreſence. "The SPIRIT ſearcheth all things, yea, the deep things of GOD."[s] Whether," ſays the Pſalmiſt, "ſhall I go from thy

[o] John xix. 7. [p] Lev. xxiv. 16, [q] Mark xiv. 61, 62.
[r] Acts v. 3, 4. [s] 1 Cor. ii. 10,

SPIRIT ?"[u] GOD is repreſented as the efficient cauſe of the new birth, or the renovation of the human heart. Reſpecting believers it is ſaid, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD."[w] This new birth is effected, evidently, by the operation of the HOLY SPIRIT. "Except a man be born—of the SPIRIT, he cannot enter into the kingdom of GOD. That which is born of the SPIRIT is ſpirit. So is every man that is born of the SPIRIT."[x] Since Revelation aſſures us that the new birth is effected by GOD himſelf, and yet, by the operation of the HOLY GHOST; unleſs we abſurdly ſuppoſe that the inſpired Evangeliſt uſed the term, GOD, in ſome improper ſenſe, we may have clear aſſurance of the *Divinity* of the HOLY GHOST.

The doctrine of GOD's Decrees, of his univerſal Providence, and the excellency of the preſent Syſtem of Adminiſtration, muſt be compriſed in the form of ſound words. In the ſhort catechiſm, compoſed by the Aſſembly of Divines, it is ſaid, "The Decrees of GOD are his eternal purpoſe, according to the counſel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatſoever comes to paſs." The ſentiment, here exhibited, appears entirely conſonant to the dictates of reaſon and Revelation. The Attributes of the DIVINE NATURE may give us ſufficient aſſurance of the higheſt perfection, glory and general happineſs of the intelligent univerſe. What is the divine goodneſs, but a diſpoſition to produce good or felicity? And, What is infinite goodneſs, but an infinitely ſtrong propenſity to produce the higheſt general good poſſible, and to order every event in a manner calculated to anſwer the beſt purpoſes? If it ſhould be conceded that the DIVINE BEING is not diſpoſed to order every event in the wiſeſt and beſt manner, calculated to anſwer the beſt purpoſes, Would not this conceſſion clearly imply an imperfection in his goodneſs? Poſſeſſed of

[u] Pſal. cxxxix. 7. [w] John i, 13. [x] Chap. iii. 5, 6. 8.

infinite goodneſs, GOD muſt be diſpoſed to produce, at all times, the higheſt general good poſſible. If any ſhould deny this, what anſwer could they give the inquiſitive mind which aſks, Why is not GOD diſpoſed to produce the higheſt general good poſſible? If they acknowledge their judgments are incompetent to aſſign a reaſon, then let them never again deny the truth of this ſentiment. If they pretend to anſwer the query, muſt not their pretended reaſon imply a groſs impeachment of the divine Goodneſs? Where then can imagination ſuppoſe any poſſible deficiency? In the divine Wiſdom? GOD is poſſeſſed of Omniſcience: He knows what is the greateſt good, and the beſt means of accompliſhing his purpoſes. If he be diſpoſed to produce the greateſt general good, and know the means beſt adapted to anſwer his purpoſes; what can prevent a fulfilment of his deſigns, unleſs there be a defect in his Power? But Omnipotence is an Attribute of his Nature: He can, with the greateſt facility, accompliſh all his pleaſure. If we may not argue and clearly conclude, from the infinite Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs of the DIVINE NATURE, that the higheſt general happineſs poſſible will be effected under the preſent ſyſtem of divine adminiſtration; it would be inconſiſtent for us ever to draw any concluſion from the cleareſt premiſes.

On the principle eſpouſed by thoſe who deny the truth of the above concluſion, why may we not argue that GOD will produce the greateſt evils poſſible under his preſent ſyſtem of adminiſtration? The reaſon is obvious: It muſt be admitted that the divine perfections afford ſufficient ſecurity againſt any ſuch abſurd concluſion. If it be conceded that the divine perfections afford this ſecurity, then it muſt be admitted that the higheſt general good poſſible will be effected under GOD's government. We may then ſafely conclude that the preſent ſyſtem of divine adminiſtration is, of all poſſible ſyſtems, the beſt. We may conclude, with equal ſafety, from

the above obſervations and preſent diſpenſations, that the higheſt general happineſs of the intelligent univerſe is conſiſtent with the miſery of a part. Let us therefore reſt ſatisfied with the truth of that inſpired aſſertion; "GOD's work is perfect."[y]

It is then infinitely deſirable that a GOD of infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, ſhould have decreed or determined, from eternity, all events reſpecting all creatures; becauſe, there is no danger that any event, even of the moſt minute, or moſt capital importance, ſhould not be under the control of infinite power united with equal wiſdom and goodneſs. It is infinitely deſirable that GOD ſhould have fixed, in eternity, by an irrefragable decree, an infallibly certain futurition of every event in the natural and moral world. Nothing, according to this idea, would be left to the chimerical production of fortuitous chance or blind contingence.

As the DIVINE BEING muſt have infinitely wiſe and holy purpoſes, he, beyond a doubt, from eternity, decreed the exiſtence of every event which ever did, ever can, or ever will, take place in the univerſe. Accordingly, Revelation ſays, "He," GOD, "hath made a Decree, which ſhall not paſs.[z] The LORD of HOSTS hath ſworn, ſaying, Surely as I have thought, ſo ſhall it come to paſs; and as I have purpoſed, ſo ſhall it ſtand."[a] The Providence of GOD is the execution or completion of his Decrees; and this muſt, evidently, extend to all creatures, from the higheſt angel to the loweſt inſect, and to all their actions. "Being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will."[b] The divine Decrees, doubtleſs, included the exiſtence of natural and moral evil. The Crucifixion of CHRIST, which conſtituted, perhaps, the moſt heinous crime which was ever perpetrated, was, moſt evidently, decreed in the divine mind from eternity; yet the wickedneſs and criminality of men in fulfilling this decree

[y] Deut. xxxii. 4. [z] Pſal. cxlviii. 6. [a] Iſa. xiv. 24. [b] Eph. i. 11.

are moſt clearly exhibited and condemned. If any ſhould imagine that the ſentiment, which ſuppoſes that CHRIST's death was decreed, partakes of blaſphemy; permit me to aſk, Who is chargeable with blaſphemy? He who believes, or he who denies, the truth of GOD's poſitive declarations? Let us hear what Inſpiration ſays: "And truly the SON of MAN goeth, as it was determined: But wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed.[c] Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of GOD, ye have taken, and, by wicked hands, have crucified and ſlain."[d] Here we find convincing evidence, that Revelation reprobates and condemns that abſurd idea, which ſuppoſes that wicked men are exculpated by the ſcheme of divine Decrees. "For of a truth againſt thy holy child JESUS, whom thou haſt anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and people of Iſrael, were gathered together; for to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel determined before to be done."[e]

Revelation teaches us that GOD created the firſt man in a ſtate of innocent integrity, or holy conformity to his moral character; and that the man apoſtatized, and expoſed himſelf and poſterity to the evil conſequences of his tranſgreſſion. "GOD created man in his own image.[f] GOD hath made man upright."[g] He gave the man a Covenant, or Law, promiſing life or happineſs as the conſequence of perfect obedience, and threatening death or endleſs miſery as the conſequence of diſobedience. "GOD commanded the man, ſaying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayeſt freely eat: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it: For in the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.[h] For the wages of ſin is death.[i] Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them."[k] According to the Law, the conſequence of ſinleſs

[c] Luke xxii. 22. [d] Acts ii. 23. [e] Acts iv. 27, 28. [f] Gen. i. 27. [g] Eccl. vii, 29. [h] Gen. ii. 16, 17. [i] Rom. vi. 23. [k] Gal. iii. 10.

obedience is endleſs felicity. "The law," ſays the apoſtle, "is not of faith: But, the man that doth them ſhall live in them."[l] Adam, doubtleſs, was conſtituted the publick Head, or Repreſentative, of his numerous poſterity: And though poſſeſſed of original rectitude, he tranſgreſſed the law of his CREATOR, and expoſed himſelf and all his poſterity to the endleſs indignation of his offended SOVEREIGN. "By one man," Adam, "ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned. By one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners."[m] In Adam all die.[n] And were by nature the children of wrath."[o]

The doctrine of particular and perſonal Election muſt be included in the form of ſound words. Without a denial of the infinite *knowledge*, and conſequently the *divinity* of the DIVINE NATURE, all muſt admit that GOD perfectly foreknew, from eternity, the particular individuals of our fallen race, who will finally enjoy the happineſs of the New Jeruſalem: Then, there was as much certainty, from eternity, of the ſalvation of thoſe particular individuals, as the moſt unconditional decree could conſtitute. This conſequence will unavoidably follow from the impoſſibility of a change in the DIVINE BEING. Some apparently unwilling to admit the idea that GOD ſhould diſplay his ſovereignty, in the abſolute diſpoſal of all his creatures, for eternity, or ſuppoſing they can avoid what they ſtyle inconſiſtencies, will boldly deny the doctrine of divine Decrees: And yet they will profeſſedly admit, perhaps becauſe they dare not diſpute, the perfect foreknowledge of the DEITY. But the diſcerning mind muſt clearly ſee, that the perfect Preſcience of GOD implies as much certainty in the futurition of every event, as the moſt unconditional and invincible Decree: Therefore, upon the ſcheme of Preſcience, no difficulty, attending the divine Decrees in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, can be avoided; becauſe no decree can more than conſti-

[l] Gal. iii. 12. [m] Rom. v. 12, 19. [n] 1 Cor. xv. 22.
[o] Eph. ii. 3.

tute an abſolute certainty in the futurition of all events.

That GOD did, in eternity, for infinitely wiſe and holy reaſons, abſolutely determine that a particular number of mankind ſhould finally enjoy ſalvation, the ſacred Scriptures give us convincing evidence. "Whom he did foreknow," ſays the apoſtle Paul, "he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his SON. Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called: And whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: And whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified.[p] According as he hath choſen us," believers, "in him," CHRIST, "before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by JESUS CHRIST to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will. Being predeſtinated according to the purpoſe of him, who worketh all things after the counſel of his own will.[q] GOD hath from the beginning choſen you," believers, "to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the SPIRIT, and belief of the truth."[r] Here we find that holineſs, the qualification for ſalvation, is clearly included in the decree. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.[s] The election hath obtained it, and the reſt were blinded.[t] Many are called, but few are choſen."[u] That we might have the moſt convincing evidence that Election is particular and perſonal, GOD ſaith, "Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated."[w] It will be of no availment here to object and ſay, that Jacob and Eſau perſonally are not included, but only their poſterity are deſigned; and that the love and hatred of the DIVINE BEING imply nothing more than temporal bleſſings and judgments. We find that Jacob perſonally is repreſented as a righteous man, and admitted to the enjoyment of heaven. "When ye ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob—in the kingdom of GOD."[x]

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[p] Rom. viii. 29, 30. [q] Eph. i. 4, 5. 11. [r] 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. [s] Acts xiii. 48. [t] Rom. xi. 7. [u] Matth. xxii. 14. [w] Rom. ix. 13. [x] Luke xiii. 28.

We likewiſe find that Eſau perſonally is repreſented as a wicked man, and one excluded from the divine favour. "Leſt there be any fornicator, or profane perſon, as Eſau, who for one morſel of meat ſold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the bleſſing, he was rejected."[y] Had the love and hatred implied nothing more than temporal good or evil, there could have been no foundation for diſputing againſt the diſplays of divine ſovereignty in granting, or withholding temporal favours, unleſs men would diſpute againſt divine providence, ſtubborn fact, and common ſenſe. Had the apoſtle not deſigned, by love toward Jacob, and hatred toward Eſau, to have repreſented GOD's eternal decree to ſave one, and reject the other, we could not ſee a ſufficient reaſon why he ſhould ſtate and anſwer a number of objections, the eſſence of which many, at the preſent day, have the audacity to urge, not againſt temporal favours, but againſt the divine Decrees. "What ſhall we ſay then? Is there unrighteouſneſs with GOD? GOD forbid. For he ſaith to Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of GOD that ſheweth mercy. For the ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh, even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt ſay unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath reſiſted his will? Nay but, O man, Who art thou that replieſt againſt GOD? Shall the thing formed ſay unto him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump, to make one veſſel unto honour and another unto diſhonour? What if GOD, willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, en-

[y] Heb. xii. 16, 17.

dured with much longſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he hath afore prepared unto glory."[z]

We have clear aſſurance that all the elect, or thoſe included in the decree of election, will finally enjoy ſalvation. GOD ſaith, "My counſel ſhall ſtand, and I will do all my pleaſure.[a] The counſel of the LORD ſtandeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.[b] The counſel of the LORD, that ſhall ſtand.[c] But he is of one mind, and, Who can turn him? And what his ſoul deſireth, even that he doth."[d] If the Scriptures clearly eſtabliſh the certainty of the ſalvation of all the elect, then they will equally eſtabliſh the certainty of the perdition of all the nonelect. Accordingly Inſpiration repreſents JESUS CHRIST in oppoſition to his enemies thus: "A ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient, whereunto alſo they were appointed."[e] Reſpecting falſe teachers it is ſaid, "Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation."[f]

Revelation apparently teaches us that there were, in eternity, covenant tranſactions, between GOD the FATHER, and GOD the SON, reſpecting the redemption and ſalvation of ſinners. "I have made a covenant with my CHOSEN. Then thou ſpakeſt in viſion to thy HOLY ONE, and ſaidſt, I have laid help upon one that is mighty."[g] The SON ſaid, with perfect acquieſcence in the terms propoſed, "Lo, I come: In the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my GOD: Yea, thy law is within my heart."[h]

The ſacred Scriptures clearly teach us the doctrine of CHRIST's Incarnation, and the neceſſity, nature and deſign of his Atonement. "The WORD was made fleſh.[i] GOD ſent forth his SON made of a

[z] Rom. ix. 14.—23. [a] Iſai. xlvi. 10. [b] Pſal. xxxiii. 11. [c] Prov. xix. 21. [d] Job xxiii. 13. [e] 1 Pet. ii. 8. [f] Jude ver. 4. [g] Pſal. lxxxix. 3. 19. [h] Pſal. xl. 7, 8. [i] John i. 14.

woman.[k] GOD was manifeſt in the fleſh.[l] He took on him the ſeed of Abraham."[m] That his ſufferings and death were abſolutely neceſſary to ſupport the glory of the divine character, the dignity of the divine government, and the authority of the divine law, in the pardon and ſalvation even of any of mankind, the following paſſages of Inſpiration exhibit convincing evidence. "Ought not CHRIST to have ſuffered theſe things? Thus it behoved CHRIST to ſuffer.[n] And as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the SON of MAN be lifted up: That whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life.[o] Whom GOD hath ſet forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs;—that he might be juſt, and the juſtifier of him which believeth in JESUS.[p] Without ſhedding of blood is no remiſſion."[q] CHRIST, doubtleſs, knew the deſign of his own death as well, at leaſt, as any of mankind can at the preſent day; and he clearly inculcated the idea that the ſalvation of believers, and of them only, was deſigned. "For GOD ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten SON," For what purpoſe? "that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life."[r]

The doctrine of total Depravity is, evidently, included in the form of ſound words. By total Depravity is meant that mankind, in their natural ſtate, are wholly under the dominion of oppoſition of heart to the true character of GOD. This is the ſoul humbling picture, which the ſacred Scriptures give, of mankind univerſally by nature. "GOD ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.[s] The heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil.[t] The heart of the ſons of men is full of evil.[u] What then? Are

[k] Gal. iv. 4. [l] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [m] Heb. 2. 16. [n] Luke xxiv. 26. 46. [o] John iii. 14, 15. [p] Rom. iii. 25, 26. [q] Heb. ix. 22. [r] John iii. 16. [s] Gen. vi. 5. [t] Eccl. viii. 11. [u] Chap. ix. 3.

we better than they? No, in no wiſe: For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin: As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one: There is none that underſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after GOD. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one.[w] For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs.[x] I know you, that ye have not the love of GOD in you.[y] Now have they both ſeen and hated both me and my FATHER. They hated me without a cauſe."[z] Here we find inconteſtable evidence that this hatred to GOD and CHRIST is repreſented as a peculiar crime; but had the impenitent and unbelieving Jews only oppoſed a falſe or imaginary character, and not the true character of GOD, this hatred might rather have been applauded as a peculiar virtue: Becauſe men are under indiſpenſable obligations to oppoſe all falſe characters of GOD. "The carnal mind," or unregenerate heart, "is enmity againſt GOD."[a]

In the ſacred Scriptures, the doctrine of total Depravity is purſued into all its natural and neceſſary conſequences; and the unregenerate are condemned for every affection of their hearts and action of their lives. CHRIST, from whoſe ſacred lips no unguarded expreſſion ever proceeded, told the wicked plainly, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the luſts of your father ye will do.[b] The carnal mind is enmity againſt GOD; for it is not ſubject to the law of GOD, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the fleſh," or in their natural ſtate, "cannot pleaſe GOD."[c] If they cannot pleaſe GOD, Where is the leaſt foundation for ſuppoſing any moral goodneſs in their doings?

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[w] Rom. iii. 9.—12. [x] Mark vii. 21, 22. [y] John v. 42. [z] Chap. xv. 24, 25. [a] Rom. viii. 7. [b] John viii. 44. [c] Rom. viii. 7, 8.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the SPIRIT of GOD: For they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.[d] Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe GOD.[e] He that believeth not is condemned already.[f] For whatſoever is not of faith is ſin."[g] CHRIST hath ſaid, "He that is not with me is againſt me."[h] This teaches us that every one, who is not a cordial friend, is an enemy to CHRIST; and any one, who never exerciſes friendly affections, will conſtantly oppoſe him. Accordingly, the unregenerate are repreſented as thoſe who perpetually oppoſe the SPIRIT of CHRIST. "Ye ſtiffnecked and uncircumciſed in heart and ears, ye do always reſiſt the HOLY GHOST."[i]

Notwithſtanding the total depravity of human nature, we find that GOD, with perfect conſiſtency, requires of ſinners the immediate exerciſe of holineſs. Of this, the following paſſages will give us indiſputable evidence. "Cleanſe your hands, ye ſinners, and purify your hearts, ye doubleminded.[k] Repent, and turn yourſelves from all your tranſgreſſions; ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin. Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions, whereby ye have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart, and a new ſpirit.[l] Now GOD commandeth all men every where to repent.[m] This is the work of GOD, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent.[n] Thou ſhalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf."[o] Againſt that antiſcriptural notion, imbibed by ſome, that the ſinleſs demands of this law are abated, CHRIST, in his firſt publick diſcourſe, was pleaſed to give his hearers particular warning. "Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to deſtroy," to abate, "but to fulfil. For verily I ſay

[d] 1 Cor. ii. 14. [e] Heb. xi. 6. [f] John iii. 18. [g] Rom. xiv. 23. [h] Matt. xii. 30. [i] Acts vii. 51. [k] James iv. 8. [l] Ezek. xviii. 30, 31. [m] Acts xvii. 30. [n] John vi. 29. [o] Matt. xxii. 37. 39.

unto you, Till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled."[p] And St. Paul reprobated the abſurd idea of a ſuppoſed abatement in the demands of the law. "Do we then make void the law through faith? GOD forbid: Yea, we eſtabliſh the law."[q]

In Revelation, the exerciſe of impartial or diſintereſted benevolence is, evidently, required. By diſintereſted benevolence is meant, a diſpoſition to promote the good and rejoice at the felicity of a being, or object, aſide from the conſideration of deriving perſonal happineſs from the object or being beloved. JESUS CHRIST hath ſaid, "Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy: But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you; that ye may be the children of your FATHER which is in heaven: For he maketh his ſun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt. For if ye love them which love you, What reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the ſame? And if ye ſalute your brethren only, What do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans ſo? Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your FATHER which is in heaven is perfect."[r] Let no man ſeek his own, but every man another's wealth.[s] Look not every man on his own things, but every man alſo on the things of others.[t] Charity," or love, which is abſolutely eſſential to the chriſtian character, "ſeeketh not her own."[u]

The atonement of JESUS CHRIST is ſolely the meritorious foundation of the ſalvation propoſed in the Goſpel. "Jeſus ſaith—I am the way, and the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the FATHER but by ME.[x] Neither is there ſalvation in any other: For there is none other name under

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[p] Matth. v. 17, 18. [q] Rom. iii. 31. [r] Matth. v. 43.—48.
[s] 1 Cor. x. 24. [t] Phil. ii. 4. [u] 1 Cor. xiii. 5. [x] John xiv. 6.

heaven given among men whereby we muſt be ſaved.[y] For other foundation," for juſtification and ſalvation, "can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST.[z] For if righteouſneſs come by the law, then CHRIST is dead in vain."[a] It will be of no availment here to object and ſay that the apoſtle meant the ceremonial law; for his own words will be a ſufficient confutation of any ſuch idea. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law."[b] The moral as well as the ceremonial law had already been given; and as righteouſneſs and ſalvation could not be granted by any law then publiſhed; it follows, that righteouſneſs and eternal life could no more be granted by the moral than by the ceremonial law: And if they could, CHRIST'S death is ſtill in vain.

Repentance and faith are not only required; but they, and they only, are the terms upon which pardon and ſalvation are obtainable. "Repent ye, and believe the goſpel.[c] Ye believe in GOD, believe alſo in me.[d] Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out.[e] He that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not ſhall be damned.[f] He that believeth on the SON hath everlaſting life: And he that believeth not the SON ſhall not ſee life; but the wrath of GOD abideth on him.[g] He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life, and ſhall not come into condemnation."[h]

Notwithſtanding the terms of pardon are preſented, and a compliance with the divine requirements enforced by every motive calculated to influence a rational mind; yet, ſuch is the amazing oppoſition of the human heart to the goſpel, that no man ever did, or ever will, comply with the terms of ſalvation, without the ſpecial influences of the HOLY SPIRIT. Accordingly, the ſacred Scriptures teach us that men

[y] Acts iv. 12. [z] 1 Cor. iii. 11. [a] Gal. ii. 21. [b] Chap. iii. 21. [c] Mark i. 15. [d] John xiv. 1. [e] Acts iii. 19. [f] Mark xvi. 16. [g] John iii. 36. [h] Chap. v. 24.

are entirely dependent on GOD for regeneration, or the renovation of the heart, and for all holy affections. "And the LORD thy GOD will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy GOD with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.[i] Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.[k] A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my SPIRIT within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.[l] Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD.[m] But GOD—even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with CHRIST. For by grace are ye saved, through faith: And that not of yourselves: It is the gift of GOD. For we are his workmanship, created in CHRIST JESUS unto good works.[n] For it is GOD which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.[o] The love of GOD is shed abroad in our hearts, by the HOLY GHOST."[p]

The doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints appears, evidently, comprised in the form of sound words. By perseverance is meant, that GOD will keep in a course of holy obedience, and will assuredly save every one who, in the present state, is regenerated, and made to believe in an offered SAVIOUR. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.[q] He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation.[r] Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.[s] He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.[t] The righteous

[i] Deut. xxx. 6. [k] Psal. cx. 3. [l] Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. [m] John i. 13. [n] Eph. ii. 4, 5. 8. 10. [o] Phil. ii. 13. [p] Rom. v. 5. [q] Mark xvi. 16. [r] John v. 24. [s] Chap. iv. 14. [t] Chap. vi. 35.

alſo ſhall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands ſhall be ſtronger and ſtronger.[u] Believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.[w] Who are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto ſalvation.[x] For whom he did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his SON—Moreover, whom he did predeſtinate, them he alſo called: And whom he called, them he alſo juſtified: And whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified."[y]

Revelation clearly teaches us the doctrine of the Reſurrection and general Judgment. "And many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt.[z] For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and ſhall come forth; they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation."[a] All the many millions of our fallen race, who have ſlept in death, will be raiſed, have their bodies clothed with immortality, and be arraigned at the tribunal of the SUPREME JUDGE, in the clear proſpect of an aſſembled and intelligent univerſe. "Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that man whom he hath ordained.[b] For we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of CHRIST; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.[c] And I ſaw the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before GOD; and the books were opened: And another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according to their works."[d]

The doctrine of endleſs Rewards and Puniſhments is clearly included in the form of ſound words. The righteous will be admitted to a ſtate of entire freedom

[u] Job xvii. 9. [w] Acts xvi. 31. [x] 1 Pet. i. 5. [y] Rom. viii. 29, 30. [z] Dan. xii. 2. [a] John v. 28, 29. [b] Acts xvii. 31. [c] 2 Cor. v. 10. [d] Rev. xx. 12.

from all natural evil, and to the enjoyment of perfect holineſs and conſummate felicity. "Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love him."[e] On the other hand, the finally impenitent and unbelieving will be plunged into a ſtate of unutterable and endleſs torment. "Theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment.[f] Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the LORD, and from the glory of his power.[g] Whoſe end is deſtruction.[h] And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never ſhall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."[i]

Thus I have endeavoured to exhibit and illuſtrate ſome of the principal doctrines contained in the form of ſound words: Thoſe doctrines which diſtinguiſh Revelation from all ſyſtems of Theology ever preſcribed by the contemplative or philoſophical world.

II. I would offer ſome conſiderations which ſhould urge miniſters ſtrictly to obey the injunction contained in the Text.

In the firſt place; GOD commands them faithfully to inculcate the form of ſound words. Giving direction to the prophet Ezekiel, GOD ſaid, "And thou, ſon of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, nor be diſmayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious houſe. And thou ſhalt ſpeak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.[k] Thus ſaith the LORD, Stand in the court of the LORD's houſe, and ſpeak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worſhip in the LORD's houſe, all the words that I command thee to ſpeak unto them; diminiſh not a word.[l] Go, ſtand and ſpeak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.[m] It was needful for me to

[e] 1 Cor. ii. 9. [f] Matt. xxv. 46. [g] 2 Theſſ. i. 9. [h] Phil. iii. 19. [i] Mark ix. 43, 44. [k] Ezek. ii. 6, 7. [l] Jer. xxvi. 2. [m] Acts v. 20.

write unto you," ſays St. Jude, "and exhort you, that ye ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints."[n] St. Paul ſays, "Continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned.[o] I charge thee—Preach the word."[p] And likewiſe our text; "Hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me, in faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS." We are not to ſuppoſe that the exhortation, in the text, means to keep back and conceal, but it, evidently, muſt mean to retain, to defend, and faithfully to inculcate the doctrines of Revelation.

In the ſecond place; The glory of GOD requires Miniſters to inculcate the form of ſound words. His glory, doubtleſs, is the higheſt end of all his operations. This idea appears entirely conſonant to the dictates of reaſon and revelation. This muſt be the principal reaſon of his granting a revelation of his holy pleaſure. The ſame glory, which, at firſt, induced him to grant a form of ſound words, muſt require miniſters faithfully to inculcate this ſyſtem of doctrines.

In the third place; Miniſters cannot be faithful to the great HEAD of the Church, nor to their own ſouls, unleſs they inculcate the form of ſound words. We find that GOD commanded the ancient prophets and apoſtles to teach the doctrines of Inſpiration; and that law is equally binding upon miniſters at the preſent day. When GOD commands, they are under infinite obligations to obey. None could be eſteemed a faithful ambaſſadour, ſhould he openly diſobey the poſitive orders of his king; becauſe fidelity conſiſts in obedience. Neither can any one be eſteemed a faithful miniſter, if he neglect to inculcate the doctrines contained in the ſacred ſcriptures. "O ſon of man," ſaith GOD to the prophet Ezekiel, "I have ſet thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael: Therefore thou ſhalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I ſay unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked

[n] Jude ver. 3. [o] 2 Tim. iii. 14. [p] Chap iv. 1, 2.

from his way, that wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity: But his blood will I require at thine hand."[q]

In the fourth and laſt place; The ſalvation of periſhing ſinners requires Miniſters faithfully to repreſent the form of ſound words. "Where there is no viſion, the people periſh."[r] If it were, at firſt, eſſential to ſalvation that GOD ſhould grant a Revelation, then it muſt be equally requiſite that the doctrines ſhould be faithfully taught. It appears eſſentially requiſite that the true character of GOD, as far as it is diſcoverable by reaſon and revelation, ſhould be repreſented. His revealed pleaſure ſhould be ſhown. His requirements ſhould be illuſtrated. The ſinner's character and condition ſhould be repreſented. The terms of pardon and ſalvation ſhould be explained. A compliance with the goſpel terms ſhould be urged and enforced by every motive, ariſing from life and death, endleſs happineſs and endleſs miſery.——I now proceed,

III. To repreſent the manner in which the Miniſters of JESUS CHRIST ſhould inculcate the form of ſound words. "Hold faſt," ſays our text, "the form of ſound words—in faith and love which is in CHRIST JESUS." In order that the commandment contained in the text may be obeyed, and the miniſterial ſervices may be acceptable to the great HEAD of the Church, goſpel miniſters ſhould be men of piety, or true friendſhip to CHRIST. It appears requiſite that all thoſe virtues, which ought to be conſpicuous in every chriſtian, ſhould, in a peculiar manner, adorn the character of every miniſter. Animated with love to GOD and JESUS CHRIST, the miniſterial duties will appear ſo far from a burden, that mental ſatisfaction will be derived from the fulfilment of the ſacred function. Without the ſupports derived from religion, he would be ready to fall into deſpondency, under the cares, labours and trials, which neceſſarily devolve upon every faithful miniſter. The apoſtle's ſaying, reſpecting charity, or love, is applicable to miniſters, as well as any other or-

[q] Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8. [r] Prov. xxix. 18.

der of men. "Though I ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity," or love, as the word is generally tranſlated, "I am become as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."[s] It is requiſite that miniſters ſhould poſſeſs faith in the divine REDEEMER. It is requiſite that, as guilty and juſtly condemned creatures, they ſhould receive and depend upon HIM entirely for divine acceptance. It is important that they poſſeſs love to HIM. It is highly requiſite that they ſhould be captivated with the uncreated glories and unrivalled beauty of his character. It is neceſſary that they ſhould poſſeſs lively and vigorous affections of heart towards HIM. It is important that they ſhould be zealouſly engaged to promote the intereſts of that kingdom, for which the great IMMANUEL became a man of ſorrows and acquainted with grief, and hung, agonized, bled and died on a croſs as the vileſt malefactor. That love to HIM ſhould be conſidered as an important qualification for a goſpel miniſter, the queſtion put, by JESUS CHRIST, to Simon Peter, may give us ſufficient evidence. "Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, LORD; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my lambs." He repeated the queſtion, and received a ſimilar anſwer; and then ſaid, "Feed my ſheep. He ſaith unto him the third time, Simon ſon of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved, becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, Loveſt thou me? And he ſaid unto him, LORD, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. JESUS ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep."[t]

The preceding Diſcourſe may naturally give riſe to a number of Inferences and Reflections.

1. Should Miniſters faithfully inculcate the Doctrines of Revelation, then they ought to poſſeſs good

[s] 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2. [t] John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

natural abilities and have a good education. A man, evidently, will not be able to underſtand the ſcheme of Revelation, without poſſeſſing good natural endowments of mind. A penetrating judgment, an acute ſagacity, and a retentive memory, may be conſidered as important qualifications. A tolerable acquaintance with the learned languages, particularly the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, appears requiſite, that a Miniſter may ſatisfy himſelf and others reſpecting ſome paſſages, which, otherwiſe, would appear "hard to be underſtood." The faithful miniſter may derive peculiar advantage from an acquaintance with natural and experimental Philoſophy, Logick, Metaphyſicks, and from ſacred, eccleſiaſtical and profane Hiſtory. While deſtitute of good natural abilities, and a good education, How could he be able both to exhort and convince gainſayers? It may be made apparent, from ſcriptural example, that a good education is a highly important qualification for a goſpel miniſter. For an illuſtration of this idea, a number of conſpicuous examples will be produced from Revelation. Moſes, the Jewiſh lawgiver, received his education at the court of Pharaoh: "He was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." Samuel appears to have received his education under the inſtruction of Eli. David received his at the court of king Saul. Solomon received his at the court of his father David. Daniel received his in the academy at Babylon. The apoſtles, likewiſe, lived a number of years, and received their education under the immediate inſtruction, and powerful eloquence of JESUS CHRIST, the SON of GOD, and LIGHT of the world. Saint Paul, the great apoſtle of the Gentiles, was likewiſe, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; and he was employed to write more epiſtles than all the other apoſtles; or as he phraſes it, "I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me."[a]

2. Is there a form of ſound words repreſented in Revelation, then we learn the propriety of confeſſions

[a] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

of faith. How ſhall we determine that any one believes the form of ſound words, without a repreſentation of the particular and fundamental doctrines of Inſpiration, or a confeſſion of faith? Should he give his aſſent to the inſpiration of the ſcriptures; this is not ſufficient to give us any determinate ideas reſpecting his ſentiments. How ſhall we determine that he is not a Jew? That he receives the Old Teſtament, and rejects the New? How ſhall we determine that he is not not a Sabellian, Pelagian, Arian, Socinian, Papiſt, Quaker, Sandemanian, Antinomian, or Univerſaliſt? From the importance of believing particular doctrines, ariſes the propriety, if not the neceſſity of confeſſions of faith. On what principle do men object againſt confeſſions of faith? Do they embrace ſuch dangerous or antiſcriptural ſentiments, that their honour requires a concealment of their principles from the world? Do they believe that the phraſeology of Revelation is ſo vague and indeterminate, that no particular ſyſtem of doctrines is taught in the ſacred volume? Do they believe that the ſcriptures, without violence, may be made to ſpeak any thing, every thing, or nothing, according to the ſinful capriciouſneſs of the human heart? Would any ſuppoſe that confeſſions of faith tend to prevent liberality and free thinking? What do they mean by liberality? Do they mean that falſe notion of charity, which denies the diſtinction between truth and errour? Which embraces Jews, Mahometans, Pagans, Deiſts, and Univerſaliſts; and believes any are the favourites of the MOST HIGH, if they only ſincerely believe the truth of their own ſchemes? Poſſeſſed of this partial kind of charity, ſome can believe that any can gain the divine approbation, except thoſe who embrace a ſtrict ſcheme of ſentiments: Theſe, however, muſt be condemned and reprobated as the moſt odious and ridiculous ſect. This appears to be the eſſence of modern catholiciſm. On this principle, will not a cordial reception, or a rejection of the bleſſed goſpel be attended with equal ſafety? If among thoſe who profeſſedly believe the divine authenticity of the ſcriptures, confeſſions of

faith could prevent this falſe notion of liberality, they would, doubtleſs, have a beneficent tendency and influence. If by liberality, we ſhould underſtand that noble diſpoſition, which embraces truth wherever it is found, without reſpect to particular denominations; it is not admitted, without proof, that confeſſions of faith will prevent this noble impartiality. Without any fear of embarraſſing the mind of Timothy in his reſearches after truth, St. Paul ſaid, "Hold faſt the form of ſound words," or confeſſion of faith, "which thou haſt heard of me." St. Jude, likewiſe, exhorted chriſtians "earneſtly to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints."[w]

3. Are Miniſters under obligations to inculcate the doctrines of Revelation, then people are under obligations to hear. It would be an idea very ſingular, to ſuppoſe that GOD requires his Miniſters to inculcate particular doctrines, and yet that people might be freed from all obligations to hear. It muſt be expected that faithful Miniſters will deliver ſome doctrines, which the human heart will oppoſe; but, this can afford no reaſon why men ſhould be excuſed from hearing. In Revelation, men are required to hear. "Hear, ye deaf.[x] Hear, and your ſoul ſhall live.[y] Hear ye, and give ear.[z] Let every man be ſwift to hear."[a]

4. Are Miniſters under obligations to inculcate the doctrines of Revelation, then we learn the unreaſonableneſs and wickedneſs of thoſe people who cenſure and condemn them, becauſe they preach doctrines which do not accord with the corrupt feelings of the human heart. If the oppoſition of the human heart to any particular doctrines of the goſpel could afford any reaſonable objection againſt the truth of thoſe doctrines; then we muſt argue that JESUS CHRIST and his apoſtles preached falſe doctrines: Becauſe, in conſequence of their preaching, the moſt implacable oppoſition of wicked men was excited. Men of this character, will equally op-

[w] Jude ver. 3. [x] Iſa. xlii. 18. [y] Chap. lv. 3. [z] Jer. xiii. 15. [a] James i. 19.

poſe the truth at the preſent day. "For every one that doth evil hateth the light."[b] The faithful miniſters of JESUS CHRIST are not inſenſible of this; yet they feel conſtrained to preach the goſpel, the pure doctrines of Revelation. They feel the ſolemnity and importance of the truſt committed to them, and their indiſpenſable obligations to declare all the counſel of GOD. People are required to exerciſe ſubmiſſion, and live in obedience to their doctrines. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves: For they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account."[c] They are ſenſible that they muſt give an account, to the great HEAD of the Church, for their ſtewardſhip, for the doctrines which they inculcate upon their periſhing fellow men. Yet, becauſe they do not, as a principal object, "ſeek to pleaſe men," but faithfully preach thoſe doctrines of the goſpel which are mortifying to the pride of human nature, people will frequently refuſe to hear them, aſperſe their characters, oppoſe them with the greateſt bitterneſs, and ſtigmatize them with all the odious epithets which a malicious mind can invent. Did not ſinners, in ancient times, treat the prophets, JESUS CHRIST, and the apoſtles, with the ſame virulence? Is not the conduct of ſuch people moſt unreaſonable and cruel, in condemning miniſters for their uprightneſs, benevolence and fidelity? Is it not attended with peculiar guilt, and does it not expoſe them to the awful diſpleaſure of an incenſed GOD? Giving directions to the preachers of the goſpel, CHRIST hath ſaid, "But into whatſoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the ſtreets of the ſame, and ſay, Even the very duſt of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off againſt you.—But I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. He that heareth you heareth me: And he that deſpiſeth you deſpiſeth me: And he that deſpiſeth me deſpiſeth him that ſent me."[d]

[b] John iii. 20. [c] Heb. xiii. 17. [d] Luke x. 10, 11, 12. 16.

5. Are miniſters under obligations faithfully to preach the doctrines of Revelation, then we learn the wickedneſs and guilt of thoſe who oppoſe theſe glorious doctrines. "Unfaithful and wicked miniſters," ſays one * of the laſt century, "are the worſt, and moſt hurtful men. Alas! what wretched work have hypocritical, unexperienced, proud, worldly, voluptuous, ignorant miniſters been making in moſt chriſtian nations, theſe fourteen hundred years! Wo to the church that hath ſuch paſtors! that hath wolves inſtead of ſhepherds! Wo to the land that hath ſuch! Wo to the ſouls that are ſubverted by them! Alas! from a corrupt clergy have ſprung the greateſt calamities of the church in all places to this day!" Have we not awful reaſon to fear that many, at the preſent day, teach, for doctrines, the commandments, ſubtilties, falſe philoſophy, and vain imaginations of men? And, inſtead of inculcating the form of ſound words, do they not, openly and avowedly, oppoſe every fundamental doctrine of the Goſpel? Inſtead of repreſenting, do they not exert all their abilities to miſrepreſent the true character of the ever bleſſed GOD? And do they not attempt to repreſent HIM in a character of partial fondneſs, without the attribute of punitive juſtice? Do they not oppoſe the revealed mode of the *Divine Exiſtence*, and repreſent JESUS CHRIST as nothing more than a mere creature, or a mere man? Do they not burleſque and declaim, inſtead of arguing, againſt the doctrine of the divine Decrees? Do they not declaim againſt the doctrine of particular and perſonal Election and Reprobation? Do they not declaim againſt the doctrine of total Depravity, extol the imaginary moral goodneſs of human nature, and attempt to make the doings of the unregenerate as pleaſing to GOD, as the holy affections of the ſaints? Do they not oppoſe the ſinleſs requirements, and teach an imaginary abatement of the moral law? Do they not raiſe popular declamations againſt the idea of impartial or diſintereſted

* Baxter.

benevolence? Do they not deny the doctrine of ſalvation by pure grace, through the righteouſneſs of JESUS CHRIST, received by faith alone? And do they not inſiſt that men are juſtified, at leaſt in part, for their imaginary good deeds? Do not many deny the doctrine of the ſpecial Influences of the HOLY SPIRIT in the renovation of the ſinner's heart, the Perſeverance of the Saints, and the endleſs puniſhment of any of mankind? To gratify the corrupt feelings of the human heart, have we not reaſon to believe that many ſpeak to periſhing ſinners ſmooth things, and propheſy deceits? Have we not reaſon to fear that they are workers together with the god of this world in oppoſing, with all their abilities, the kingdom of CHRIST, and promoting the kingdom of darkneſs, and the endleſs damnation of their fellow men? GOD hath made a revelation of his pleaſure; and if any reject the light, they will find no excuſe available. The awful conſequence of oppoſing the doctrines of the Goſpel is clearly repreſented. The SUPREME JUDGE hath ſaid, "Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt," i. e. ſhall have no part, "in the kingdom of heaven."[e] St. Paul's denunciation againſt falſe teachers we are not to ſuppoſe was too ſevere, ſince he was under the inſpiration of the HOLY GHOST. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed." With what ſolemnity does the apoſtle repeat the ſentiment! "As we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, If any man preach any other goſpel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.[f] For I teſtify," ſaith JESUS, "unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, GOD ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, GOD ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out

[e] Matth. v. 19. [f] Gal. i. 8, 9.

of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."[g]

I might proceed to other Inferences and Reflections, but the brevity of time urges me to close this discourse with some addresses suitable to the present solemnity.

May not propriety allow me, though with deference; yet with a christian freedom, to address my worthy Fathers and Brethren engaged in the sacred Ministry?

REVEREND FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

THE work in which we have engaged is most arduous and solemn, and our obligations to be faithful are powerfully binding. That we may be animated to a course of strict fidelity, unfading rewards are displayed on the one hand; and on the other, a charge with the blood of others. It hath pleased GOD to admit us to share the peculiar honour of being workers together with HIM, in accomplishing the designs of infinite wisdom and goodness. We are admitted to the unspeakable honour and privilege of being ambassadours of the PRINCE of PEACE. Why should JESUS CHRIST count us faithful, in putting us into the ministry? In distinguishing us from the greatest part of our fellow sinners, he hath expressed his pure favour. We owe the great REDEEMER the tribute of our unfeigned and everlasting gratitude. How should our hearts now be inflamed with grateful affections towards the supreme HEAD of the Church! We are by nature the children of wrath even as others. We can ascribe our dignity and privilege only to rich, free, sovereign grace.

Let us recollect the vows which we made at our own ordination, and inquire how far, by divine grace, we have fulfilled them. If we can enjoy the testimony of our own consciences, that we have engaged in our work from pure love to CHRIST, and an ardent desire of promoting the everlasting good of our perishing fellow men; yet, Have we not great reason

[g] Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

humbly to ſupplicate freſh ſupplies of divine grace, that we may be quickened to a zealous and faithful diſcharge of every duty? Our work is connected with conſequences moſt ſolemn and tremendous. While we preach the unſearchable riches of CHRIST, we are inſtruments in fitting men, either for the ſinleſs joy of Paradiſe, or for the darkeſt horrours of endleſs burnings. "For we are unto GOD," ſays the apoſtle, "a ſweet ſavour of CHRIST, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. To the one, we are the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other, the ſavour of life unto life."[h] Let us aſk ourſelves, as in the preſence of the great SEARCHER of HEARTS, Do we cordially approve of the form of ſound words inculcated in Revelation? Have we faithfully preached the inſpired doctrines? And are we fully determined, by divine aſſiſtance, to perſiſt in this, even againſt all the oppoſition which may be raiſed by the combined forces of earth and hell? We have moſt ſolemnly, before GOD, angels, and men, engaged to conſecrate all our talents, and all our time, to the glory of GOD and the good of our fellow men. GOD is our witneſs—JESUS CHRIST is our maſter—Our lives are ſhort and uncertain—Our people are dying—A crown of glory will be the certain conſequence of fidelity—If found unfaithful, we muſt be charged with the blood of others—GOD's commandments are urgent—And the cauſe of religion demands our utmoſt exertions. Let us be animated to a courſe of ſtrict and perſevering fidelity to the great HEAD of the Church and his intereſt in the world. May we finally obtain the approbation of an applauding JUDGE, and be admitted to join in the ſong of Moſes and the LAMB.

Let our addreſs now turn to our younger brother, the Paſtor elect, who, this day, is to be ſeparated to the Goſpel of CHRIST.

DEAR BROTHER,

THE ſolemn period is arrived, when you are to be ordained a goſpel Biſhop by the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery. You are to be a coworker with

[h] 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

GOD himſelf in accompliſhing the deſigns of redeeming love. You are to be an ambaſſadour of the PRINCE of PEACE, and ſeparated ſolely to the work of the goſpel miniſtry. You have, doubtleſs, in your own mind, endeavoured, humbly and prayerfully, to conſider the importance and ſolemnity of the work before you; and, we truſt and charitably hope that you find a cordial willingneſs to devote yourſelf to JESUS CHRIST and his cauſe forever. We truſt that you, this day, renewedly and joyfully conſecrate yourſelf to GOD and his ſervice, without the leaſt reſerve. You have received the earneſt and united invitations of this church and people to favour them with your ſtated labours. You have found a willingneſs to give your conſent to labour among them ſtatedly in holy things. Theſe precious and immortal ſouls, every one of whom is capable of enjoying more happineſs, or of enduring more miſery, than all created beings in the univerſe have yet enjoyed or endured, are now to be committed to your particular care. That they may be cordially reconciled to GOD, and be ſaved in the day of the LORD JESUS, you are indiſpenſably bound to labour, watch and pray. For them, as well as for yourſelf and ſtewardſhip, you muſt give a particular account to the great HEAD of the Church and JUDGE of the world, in the conſpicuous preſence of an aſſembled univerſe. If any of theſe precious ſouls ſhould finally periſh, my brother, through your indolence or unfaithfulneſs, be aſſured that its blood will be required at your hands. "O ſon of man," ſaid GOD to the prophet Ezekiel, "I have ſet thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael: Therefore thou ſhalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I ſay unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if thou doſt not ſpeak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity: But his blood will I require at thine hand."[i] Your preaching will be connected with conſequences moſt ſolemn and important: It will extend its influence

[i] Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8.

into the world of future rewards and puniſhments. It will be "unto GOD a ſweet ſavour of CHRIST, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. To the one," it will be "the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other, the ſavour of life unto life." Does this conſideration fill your ſoul with ſolemnity and ſolicitude, and are you ready to exclaim with the apoſtle, "Who is ſufficient for theſe things?"[k] Let me obſerve, if under your holy miniſtrations your hearers ſhould be convinced, converted, edified and finally ſaved, they will add a peculiar luſtre to your future crown of glory. Your works, flowing from love to CHRIST and fidelity in his ſervice, will ſhine before GOD with increaſing ſplendour and felicity, when he ſhall have extinguiſhed the ſun, as a taper, and cauſed the heavens to paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements to melt with fervent heat.

The life of a faithful miniſter will be a life of prayerfulneſs, vigilance and perſevering aſſiduity. His work is arduous, trying, ſolemn and laborious: Yet, it has been, and ſtill will be eſteemed the unſpeakable honour and pleaſing employment of the friends of GOD. It is emphatically a good work. Permit me to recommend the ſtricteſt watch over your own heart. Take heed to yourſelf, that you poſſeſs thoſe amiable affections, which you are to inculcate upon others. See that you poſſeſs moſt fervent love to GOD and the great REDEEMER. Maintain a courſe of inviolable piety. You will maintain conſtant communion with the FATHER of your ſpirit. "Keep thy heart with all diligence: For out of it are the iſſues of life."[l] You will avoid every ſpecies of converſation, and every attachment to created objects, which may tend to interrupt your piety of heart. You will exhibit a life of unwearied labour, unſpotted innocence, inviolable integrity, and unfeigned benevolence. "Be thou an example of the believers in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."[m] Let your time, and all your abilities, natural and ac-

[k] 2 Cor. ii. 16. [l] Prov. iv. 23. [m] 1 Tim. iv. 12, 13.

quired, be employed in your work. "Study to ſhow thyſelf approved unto GOD, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."[n] In your reſearches after truth, you will humbly and prayerfully depend upon CHRIST for light, aſſiſtance and direction. Look to him ſolely, and let your dependence be on no human guide. You will, I truſt, with humility and prayerfulneſs, ſearch the ſcriptures for doctrines, and admit no ſentiment, of a religious kind, unleſs you believe that it is either clearly taught, or fairly deducible from thoſe ſacred Oracles. You will take heed that your doctrines may indeed be the doctrines of CHRIST, free from ambiguity, and calculated for the underſtanding of your hearers. In your general method, you will avoid a looſe, unmeaning, declamatory manner of preaching. This, though applauded by ſome, may appear calculated to pleaſe the ear, rather than inform the mind and edify the heart. You will let your ſermons be filled with weighty truths, applied with faithfulneſs and pungency. You will pay attention to the ſtate of the flock of CHRIST, over which the HOLY GHOST is about to make you an Overſeer. You will labour for the exerciſe of a goſpel mode of diſcipline, which, in general, at the preſent day, appears unhappily to be neglected. This, however, is neceſſary for the honour of religion, and very exiſtence of a goſpel church. Should errours ariſe and vices appear, you will exert yourſelf to confute and ſuppreſs them. You will pay attention to the lambs of the flock, and inſtruct them in the things of the kingdom. You will pay attention to families and individuals, involved in ſcenes of affliction. In ſhort, you will endeavour, as a faithful ſteward, to give every one his portion in due ſeaſon.

You will remember, my dear brother, the vanity, ſhortneſs and uncertainty of human life. Entertain a lively ſenſe of death, judgment, and the retributions of the inviſible world. Your eyes which ſparkle with animating luſtre, will quickly ſleep—your lips will

[n] 2 Tim. ii. 15.

be ſpeedily cloſed—your countenance will be changed into mortal paleneſs—and your active limbs will be bound in the dreary arms of death. Many of your hearers will, probably, have very few more opportunities in the houſe of publick worſhip. If any of them ſhould die in impenitence and unbelief, they muſt lie down in endleſs ſorrow. Have we not awful reaſon to fear that the greateſt part are diſpoſed ſtill to reject an offered SAVIOUR, are under the curſe of the law, and obnoxious, every moment, to the unutterable torments of hell? And will they not eternally periſh unleſs they accept of offered deliverance? Iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold. Does not the confutation of hereſies, imbibed by many, at the preſent day, demand the exertion of the ſervants of CHRIST? GOD is the witneſs of all your conduct. The eyes of CHRIST will be conſtantly upon you, whether in your private ſtudies, or your publick miniſtrations. Angels—we who ordain you—ſaints—theſe numerous ſpectators—and ſinners, may be witneſſes of your faithful exertions in the cauſe of religion. Ariſe then, my brother, gird up the loins of your mind, and exert all your powers to promote the intereſts of righteouſneſs. Preach JESUS CHRIST and him crucified. Repreſent the goſpel terms of ſalvation, and urge your hearers, by every ſolemn and endearing motive, to receive an offered SAVIOUR. If many ſhould finally periſh, ſee that you are freed from the charge of their blood. Fear not the reproaches of a wicked and deſpiſing world, but faithfully inculcate the form of ſound words, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. CHRIST will acknowledge your faithful adherence to him and his intereſt before an aſſembled univerſe. May you have many, who, at the great day, may be ſeals of your miniſtry for your crown of rejoicing. May you enjoy the ſupports of divine grace in a courſe of inviolable and perſevering fidelity. Be thou faithful unto the death, and the exalted dignities and the refined pleaſures of the New Jeruſalem ſhall be thine enjoyment.

The Church and Society, in this place, are deeply intereſted in the ſolemn tranſactions of this day; they will, therefore, ſuffer me to addreſs them.

MEN AND BRETHREN,

WE rejoice in the harmony ſo conſpicuous, and in the anticipation of thoſe pleaſing conſequences, which we hope will reſult from the ſolemn tranſactions of this day. We preſent you with our congratulations, on this auſpicious event, that it hath pleaſed GOD to viſit you with a ſpirit of union, in diſpoſing you to make choice of one for your Paſtor and Teacher; and that he hath inclined the heart of his ſervant to take the care and overſight of you in the LORD. We charitably hope he is one after GOD'S own heart. We hope you will receive him as a precious aſcenſion gift. We truſt that a conviction of duty, and affection for you have conduced to effect his ſettlement among you. He comes to you on an errand of peculiar benevolence. He muſt watch for your ſouls as one who muſt give an account for his ſtewardſhip. You muſt not expect that he is one of the angelick order, nor that he will be diveſted of all human imperfections. What will be the conſequences of his preaching, with regard to individuals, we cannot, at preſent, determine. Of this, however, we may be ſure, that you will, under his miniſtrations, be ripened for futurity: Some, we truſt, will be ripened for the ſinleſs joys of paradiſe; and others, we muſt fear, will be ripened for the moſt aggravated deſtruction in hell.

From the affection already manifeſted towards the man whom you have choſen, we hope that the connexion formed will be durable, and its conſequences moſt pleaſing and happy. We truſt you will give your miniſter your countenance, ſupport and encouragement. We are unwilling to believe that you will deſpiſe his youth, or that you will not eſteem him highly for his work's ſake. From paſt expreſſions of your friendſhip and attachment to him, we truſt you will be unwilling to raiſe up, propagate, or

believe any reports which would tend to injure his character, and prevent his uſefulneſs. We truſt you will treat his character with great tenderneſs and reſpect. We truſt that you will be engaged to make his temporals as convenient as your abilities will admit, that he may devote himſelf wholly to his work. "The LORD hath ordained, that they which preach the goſpel ſhould live of the goſpel."[o] It will become you to pray for him with humility, fervour and conſtancy.

Take heed how ye hear. It will become you to attend upon the preaching of the word with impartial and upright minds, ready to embrace divine truth, let it be ever ſo mortifying to the pride of human nature. If you ſhould neglect publick worſhip, particularly on the Sabbath, you cannot reaſonably expect that the goſpel will conduce to your future felicity. As in ancient times, "the word preached did not profit, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it;"[p] ſo, at the preſent day, we are not authorized to expect that the goſpel will conduce to the final happineſs of any, unleſs they ſhould hear it in faith and love. Attend upon every ſermon with the ſame affections and ſolemn emotions, which would become you, had you clear aſſurance that another opportunity would never be granted, before you and your miniſter ſhall meet at the judgment ſeat of CHRIST. May you long enjoy the labours of your miniſter. May he be a peculiar and laſting bleſſing to you and your ſeed. May multitudes be converted, under his miniſtrations, and cleanſed in the atoning blood of the great REDEEMER. May you, with your miniſter, long live in peace, harmony, and in the exerciſe of reciprocal love. "Finally," men and "brethren—Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the GOD of love and peace ſhall be with you."[q]

This numerous Aſſembly will now ſuffer the word of exhortation.

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[o] 1 Cor. ix. 14. [p] Heb. iv. 2. [q] 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

MY DEAR FELLOW MORTALS AND FELLOW SINNERS,

THIS is the firſt opportunity which Providence hath given me to addreſs you, as an ambaſſadour of CHRIST; and it will, probably, be the laſt time we ſhall behold each other's faces previous to the general judgment. You will ſuffer me to addreſs you with faithfulneſs, and to warn you; for I would not, for thouſands of worlds, allure you down to everlaſting burnings.

You will pleaſe to remember, with deep humility, that GOD is a moſt glorious being, poſſeſſed of all poſſible perfection, glory and moral excellency. You are moral agents, proper ſubjects of moral government, poſſeſſed of ſenſation, reaſon and affections. GOD hath eſtabliſhed a holy, juſt and good law, requiring the perfect and perſevering obedience of all his intelligent creatures, on penalty of complete and endleſs miſery. We, my friends, individually, have broken this law: We are, by nature, enemies to the moral character of GOD, and, therefore, the children of wrath. According to the law, then, no individual of our fallen race can enjoy ſalvation.

You will pleaſe to remember, with the higheſt wonder, love and gratitude, that GOD the FATHER hath ſo loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten SON, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. Now GOD can diſplay the glory of his character, ſupport the dignity of his government, and preſerve the authority of his law in pardoning the greateſt rebels of our fallen race, upon their cordial compliance with particular terms. Now GOD, your Creator, Preſerver and conſtant Benefactor, requires you, as ruined and juſtly condemned creatures, to receive and rely upon his SON, entirely, for pardon and ſalvation. Now GOD offers you heaven with all its ſinleſs pleaſures, upon your believing; and he conſtantly threatens you with endleſs torment, while you refuſe. If now, my dear friends, you ſhould reject an offered SAVIOUR, and die in impenitence and unbelief, it will be more tol-

erable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.[r] And will not your misery be most tremendous, while you must be punished, not only for sinning against the moral law, but against the gospel, and the love of a crucified SAVIOUR? "He that despised Moses's law," says St. Paul, "died without mercy under two or three witnesses; Of how much sorer punishment," sorer than dying without the least exercise of mercy, "suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden undet foot the SON of GOD?"[s] To such as reject the SON, even the love which the FATHER hath towards him, becomes a source of peculiar terror, and prompts him to the execution of the most signal vengeance. Life and death, blessing and cursing, salvation and damnation, are exhibited, and you are urged to partake of the water of life freely.

To enforce an immediate compliance, let me observe, that your lives are short and uncertain. Death is approaching as rapidly as the wheels of time—the scenes of eternity are unfolding—and the solemn period of the general judgment is approaching. Should you delay one day, you may be fixed in the blackest horrours of endless despair. O my dear friends! believe in the blessed REDEEMER, and you shall assuredly be saved; but refuse, and you may be equally sure of destruction. May GOD, in his infinite mercy, grant, that we all may be sanctified, adopted and justified, that we may enjoy happiness in life, peace and the light of his countenance in the agonies of dissolving nature, and complete blessedness through eternal ages.———AMEN.

[r] Matt. xi. 24. [s] Heb. x. 28, 29.